East Timor *Action* Network / United St

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PRESS ADVISORY: East Timorese Witnesses to visit United States

Two survivors of recent paramilitary violence in East Timor will be Washington the week of May 3, together with an East Timorese with detailed, first-hand knowledge of Indonesian military and paramilitary operations in East Timor. Contact the Washington office of the East Timor *Action* Network for further information or to arrange interviews. The week of May 10, they will be in New York. Contact ETAN's Media/outreach office.

Francisco de Jesus da Costa

Home: Liquiça, East Timor. 25 years old, born in Liquiça. Roman Catholic.

Self-employed. Studied electrical technology at Don Bosco Fatumaca high school and Polytechnic University in Dili, East Timor.

He is an adopted son of Father Rafael dos Santos, the head of the Catholic church in Liquiça, which was attacked by Indonesia-backed paramilitary forces on April 6, 1999. More than 2,000 civilians seeking shelter from paramilitary violence were in the church and on the grounds. Indonesian riot police shot tear gas into the church. As the terrified refugees ran out, paramilitaries attacked them with arrows, spears and homemade guns, killing about 50 people. The paramilitaries also attacked the priest's residence, murdering five people who were hiding upstairs. They tried to kill Father Rafael and the assistant pastor, but their guns failed to fire.

On that day, Francisco da Costa was in Father Rafael's residence when the military and paramilitaries attacked. Mr. Da Costa received six serious head wounds. He is the only survivor/witness to the Liquica massacre who has left East Timor and Indonesia and is therefore able to testify about what happened.

Vicente Soares Faria

Home: Dili, East Timor. 38 years old, born in Fatuberliu, East Timor. Roman Catholic. Vice Dean of Student Affairs and lecturer in Public Administration at the University of East Timor, and active in pro-self-determination movements.

Prof. Soares Faria is high on the list of people named by paramilitaries for assassination, and is fleeing East Timor to preserve his life.

From 1975 until his capture in 1979, he was a teenage guerilla fighter in the jungle against the Indonesian invading army, and also a member of the underground OPJT (East Timor Youth Organization). After his capture, he was coerced to become an Indonesian public servant, and attended high school in Manufahi and studied Public Administration at the University of East Timor. Since 1994, he has served on the University of East Timor faculty, and was elected Vice Dean of Student Affairs in 1997. He is also an advisor to the Solidarity Council of the East Timorese student movement, Coordinator of the political section of FORSAREPETIL (Post-graduate Timorese Forum for Referendum and Development), and President of the HATIMOR (Hadomi Timor) Foundation. His advocacy of self-determination and support for the National Council of Timorese Resistance (CNRT) has made him a target for pro-Indonesia militias.

Manuel dos Mártires

Home: East Timor, living in exile since December 1998. 31 years old, born in Dili, East Timor.

Until December, he worked at the regional Indonesian military command in Dili, and had access to detailed data on staff and personnel deployments. Last August, and again in November, he released information to the worldwide media which proved that Indonesian troop levels in East Timor were over 21,000, more than twice what had been officially acknowledged. The materials released by Mr. Mártires also documented close cooperation and direction of the paramilitary forces in East Timor by the Indonesian military. In the five months since then, paramilitaries have killed over 150 East Timorese civilians, often coordinating their operations with the Indonesian troops who created and armed them.

From 1987 through 1994 he was employed by the KOREM 164/WIRA DHARMA (the Indonesian military command for East Timor) in Dili, working at the offices of KODIM 1639/AMBENO (military district command in Oecussi). From 1994 until he had to leave East Timor last December, he was responsible for computer data entry at the staff/personnel department of the KOREM 164/WIRA DHARMA (military headquarters) in Dili. In that position, he had access to data on military personnel management, and supplied the East Timorese resistance with intelligence relating to Indonesia's military forces.

Following the death of East Timorese guerilla leader David Alex in 1997, Mr. Mártires began sending data to a journalist in Australia. Articles based on this information were published around the world in October 1998, and the Indonesian authorities started investigating to find out how it had been leaked. At that point, Mr. Mártires decided it was time to seek the safety of another country. He arrived in Portugal on December 29, 1998.